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Foreign Affairs, Soviet Union, Wright Trip, Soviet Jews: The Jewish Herald-Voice 4/30/1987

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4/30/87.

**Congressman says on return from Moscow:
'Glasnost' on arms control, Afghanistan,
but 'not a whisper' on relief of Soviet Jews**

Mickey Leland meets with Mikhail Gorbachev

WASHINGTON, —The extensive weeklong talks in Moscow between U.S. officials and congressmen with top Soviet leaders yielded improved circumstances on arms control but deepened doubts about better Soviet human rights policies and conditions for Jewry in the near term, Americans involved in the meetings indicated on their return here.

There was *glasnost* ("openness") on arms control and regional problems, specifically Afghanistan, but none on Jews, said Rep. James Scheuer (D-N.Y.), after taking part in the visit to Moscow.

Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.), chairman of the joint Senate-House Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe based on the Helsinki accords, made clear he opposes ignoring or submerging of human rights issues in the process toward arms control. Hoyer believes, an aide noted to this reporter for the *Jewish Herald-Voice*, "The Soviet-American relationship cannot be complete without human rights issues resolved."

Refuseniks, Hoyer observed, are "very disappointed" with the possibilities for Jewish emigration, "perhaps because of the raised expectations" brought by Mikhail Gorbachev's statements on *glasnost*. The congressman noted, the aide said, "stark contrasts of energy and optimism of the top Soviet echelon and the bleak reality of refuseniks who have been waiting for years to leave the country. It was absolutely striking to him."

Rep. Scheuer, the lone Jewish congressman among the 20 led by Speaker Jim Wright (D-Tex.), who spent six days in the Soviet Union, told this reporter: "We got none of those signals Morris Abram got two weeks earlier. There was no suggestion of major reappraisal of policies" by Soviet authorities regarding Soviet Jewry.

Abram, head of the National Conference for Soviet Jewry and of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, and Edgar Bronfman, chairman of the World Jewish Congress, said they received assurances in Moscow from high-level Soviet officials of emigration within the year of most of the

human rights, said in Montreal that the Soviet Union is conducting "a human rights offensive magisterially organized by Mikhail Gorbachev" but bearing little signs of human rights, including Jewish emigration," the *Jewish Week* of New York reported.)

At the "Shultz Seder" at the American Embassy in Moscow — the celebration by Secretary of State George Shultz with some 50 refuseniks on the first night of Passover — Americans were implored not to weaken the U.S. restrictions on trade benefits until guarantees were in place for large-scale Jewish emigration and religious rights improved.

Tears dropped from the eyes of Richard Perle, who is leaving as assistant secretary of defense, when he was fervently asked by Alexander Lerner, the noted scientist denied a visas for years, to help keep Jackson-Vanik intact. Perle, chief architect of the Reagan administration's policy on arms control, was a principal in the drafting of the Jackson-Vanik amendment when he was assistant to the late Sen. Henry Jackson (D-Wash.).

Scheuer, who praised Hoyer's activity for Soviet Jewry during the visit, said "there was not a whisper of fundamental reappraisal being contemplated on emigration or religious practices. There was *glasnost* on arms control and regional problems, specifically Afghanistan, but none on Jews." He noted that the Soviets were "very forthcoming on arms control" since "their economy is in shambles and they desperately need to divert assets to their domestic purposes. They are amenable to a timetable to leave Afghanistan provided they can leave a stooge government there."

"It was hard to underestimate the cynicism in the way they treat their own people," Scheuer said. He, along with other congressmen, including Houston's Mickey Leland, had met with Soviet leaders, including Mikhail Gorbachev; President Andrei Gromyko; Yegor Ligachev, rated second in authority to Gorbachev; Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze; and others.

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Abram, head of the National Conference for Soviet Jewry and of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, and Edgar Bronfman, chairman of the World Jewish Congress, said they received assurances in Moscow from high-level Soviet officials of emigration within the year of most of the 11,000 refuseniks and permission for extension of Jewish religious and cultural life.

Richard Schifter, assistant secretary of state for human rights and humanitarian affairs, said that middle-level Soviet officials in Moscow outlined intention to review the requests of up to 12,000 refuseniks but after that Jews will be treated like other Soviet citizens, which means very few will be permitted to emigrate.

"What they would like to accomplish at this particular point," Schifter said, according to *The New York Times*, "is to get the refusenik group out of there and hope that there would be a significant decline in pressure for emigration so that they can put the issue away."

(Irwin Cotler, the McGill University law professor who is internationally outstanding in support of

Wash.).

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At one point in the visit, Gorbachev suggested that he knew the best way to solve the problems of minorities was somewhat of a modified or required segregation system to be imposed. Congressman Leland countered by stating that he felt his experience in that issue was a little greater than that of Gorbachev's — at least from a citizen's point of view.

In the areas of arms control and Afghanistan, Scheuer said, "Gorbachev and Ligachev are two 20th century characters who wish to break with the past, but you get no such feeling when it comes to human rights and Jewish emigration or any prospect for ameliorating conditions of Jews who want to lead a Jewish life which they (the Soviets) are absolutely bound to do under their clear commitment to the Helsinki accords."

Scheuer, who was arrested in 1972 in Moscow while visiting

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